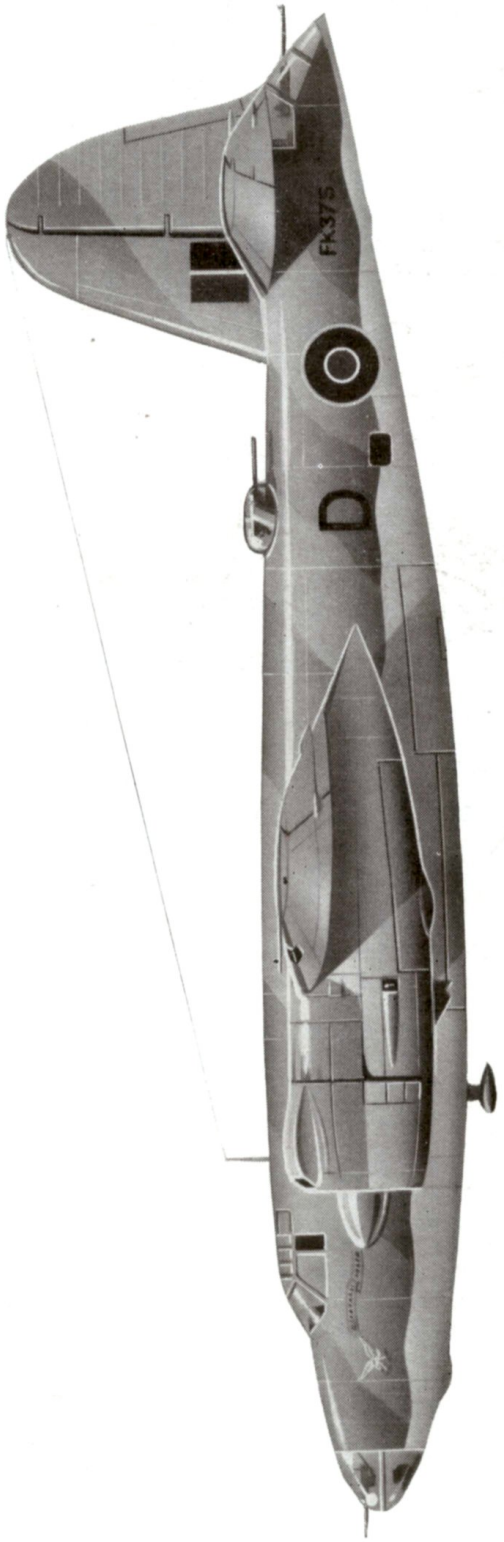
PROFILE PUBLICATIONS

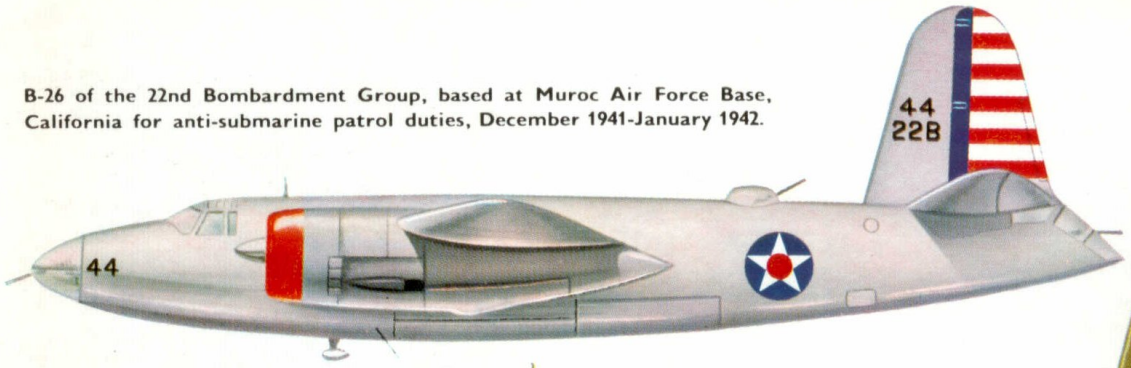
The Martin B-26B & C Marauder



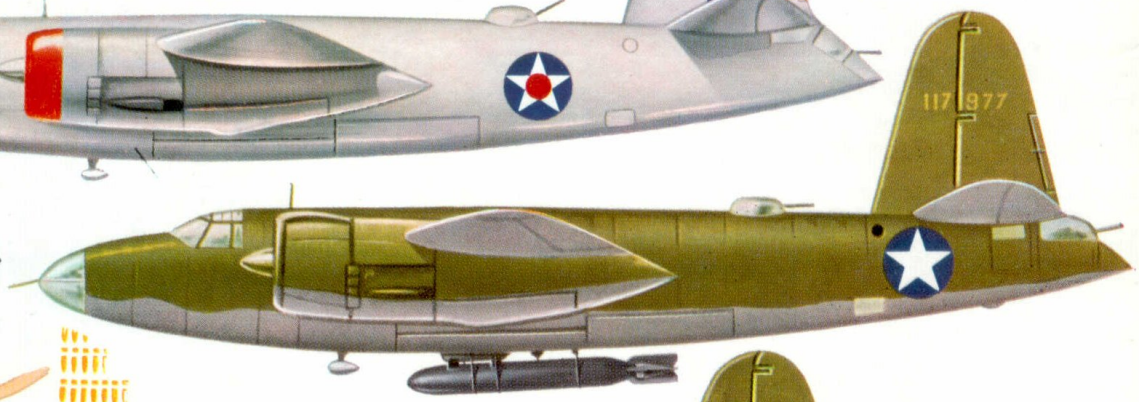
NUMBER 112

TWO SHILLINGS

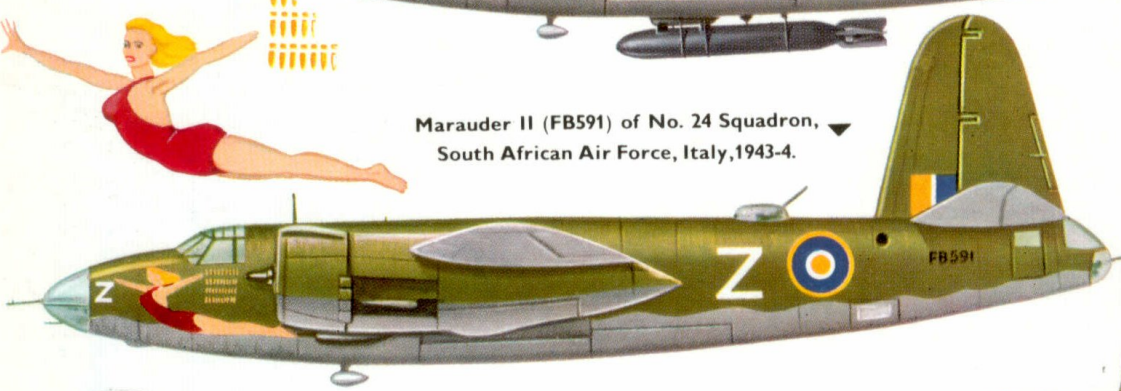
B-26 of the 22nd Bombardment Group, based at Muroc Air Force Base, California for anti-submarine patrol duties, December 1941-January 1942.



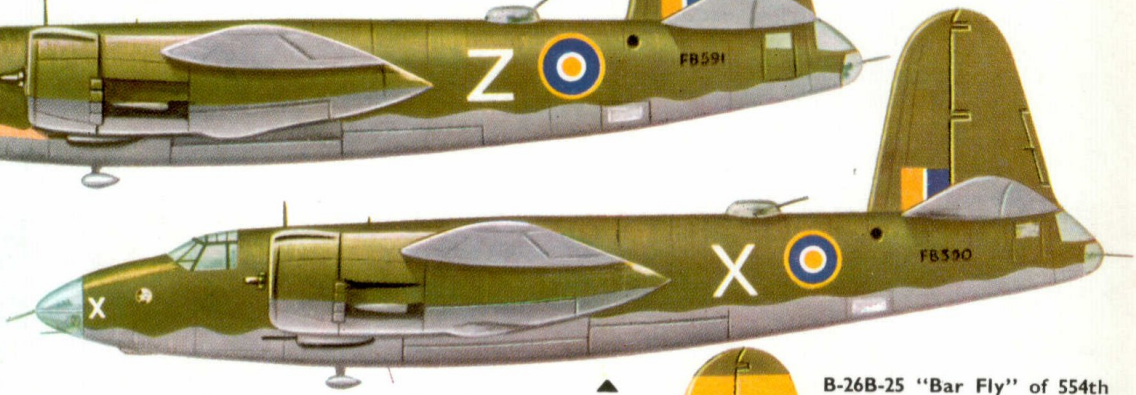
B-26 on torpedo bombing trials, Pacific, 1942.



Marauder II (FB591) of No. 24 Squadron, South African Air Force, Italy, 1943-4.



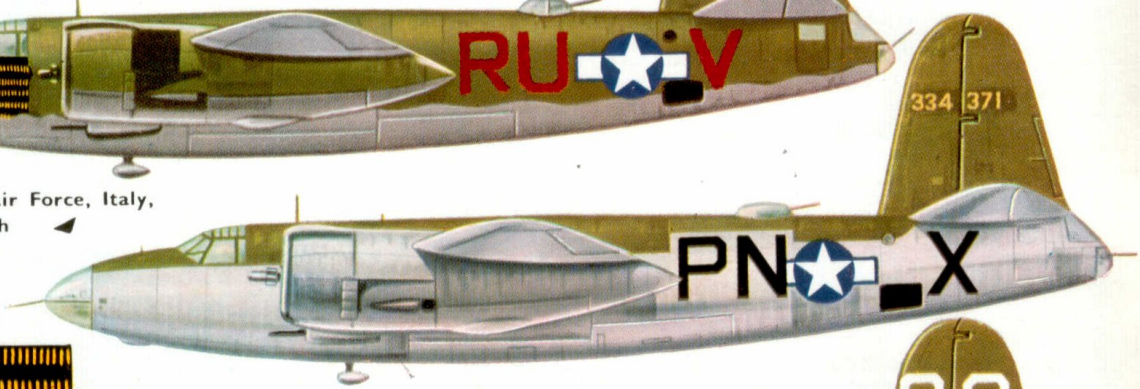
Insignia of No. 24 Sqdn. S.A.A.F., as carried on nose of FB590.



Marauder II (FB590) of No. 24 Squadron, South African Air Force, Italy 1943-4.

B-26B-25 "Bar Fly" of 554th Bombardment Squadron, 86th Bombardment Group, 9th Air Force; Boxted, U.K., 1943-4.

B-26C of the 9th Air Force, Italy, 1944. Probably 449th Bombardment Bomber Group. Squadron, 322nd



Nose panel of "Bar Fly"

B-26B "Millie III", of the 34th Bombardment Squadron, "The Thunderbirds", Villacidro, Sardinia, 1943.

by Ray Wagner

The Martin B-26B & C Marauder

"Flak Bait", B-26B-25 s/n 41-31773 of the 449th Bombardment Squadron, 322nd Bombardment Group, 9th Air Force. This veteran Marauder was photographed on its 200th operational mission, and was the first Allied bomber in the European theatre to achieve this record. The first mission was carried out on 16th August, 1943. Note the varying positions of the fuselage national insignia, the tunnel gun, and the 300 patches covering more than 1,000 flak and bullet holes received by "Flak Bait" in the course of her long career.
(Photo: Imp. War Mus. FRA 106065)

At the height of the war against Nazi Germany, the most important American medium bomber was the Martin B-26 Marauder. It had a reputation as a "hot" plane in combat, but was an unforgiving handful for the unwary pilot.

Development had proceeded parallel to the North American B-25 Mitchell (see *Profile* No. 59) both types being designed to a specification for a five-place bombardment aircraft issued 25th January 1939 by the Army Air Corps. After the opening of bids 5th July 1939, contracts for both types were announced 10th August and finally approved 20th September. The largest award, to the Glenn L. Martin Company of Baltimore, Maryland, provided $15,815,000 for 201 B-26 aircraft.

The design that won this contract, Martin Model 179, was the creation of Peyton M. Magruder in June 1939. Responding to the Army specification emphasising top speed and setting no limit on landing speed, this engineer utilized a small wing, resulting in a high wing loading and fast landing speed; the latter handled by the use of tricycle landing gear. A long drag profile was chosen for a circular fuselage providing a near-perfect aerodynamic shape.

For power plants, the most powerful units then available were chosen. The two Pratt & Whitney R-2800-5 Wasps had four-bladed 13 ft. 6 in. Curtiss electric propellers to absorb the big radial's 1,850 h.p. at takeoff and 1,500 h.p. at 14,000 feet.

Four ·30 calibre guns had been specified for the original armament, but this was increased when Martin developed a power-operated deck gun turret, the first such turret to go into American production. Self-sealing fuel tanks and 555 lbs. of armour were specified for a B-26A version added on option to the original contract, and by 30th September 1940, the Army decided to include these features on all B-26's under construction.

Although the first B-26 had yet to fly, the orders for 139 B-26A's on 16th September and 791 B-26B's on 28th September 1940 brought the total on order to 1,131 aircraft. No prototype, as such, was planned because of the Army's desire to get its new medium bombers into production.

On 25th November 1940, chief engineer and test pilot William K. Ebel lifted 40-1361, the first B-26, on its maiden flight. Its streamlined form, from the plexiglass nose cone to the tail cone behind the single rudder, earned immediate attention as a virtual "flying torpedo".

The original contract specification was for an empty weight of 19,250 lbs. and gross weight of 26,625 lbs. with a guaranteed performance of 323 m.p.h. top

The first B-26 in flight; the initial flight of 40-1361 was on 25th November 1940, with William K. Ebel at the controls.
(Photo: U.S.A.A.F.)

B-26A with dummy torpedo slung under fuselage. Limited torpedo-bombing operations were attempted in the South-West Pacific; on 4th June 1942, during the Midway operations, four aircraft of a mixed force from the 38th and 22nd Bomb. Grp.'s attacked Japanese carriers. No hits have been recorded with certainty, and two of the machines were lost to flak and fighters. (Photo: U.S.A.A.F.)

speed, 26,440 feet service ceiling and range of 1,800 miles. The actual B-26 aircraft weighed 21,375 lbs. empty and 27,200 lbs. gross in design condition. Top speed was 315 m.p.h. at 15,000 feet, service ceiling 25,000 feet, and range was 1,000 miles at 265 m.p.h. with 3,000 lb. bomb load and 962 gallons of fuel. Maximum ferry range was 2,200 miles with 1,212 gallons.

Dimensions included a wing span of 65 feet, 602 sq. ft. wing area, 56 feet length and 19 ft. 10 in. height. Effects of the high wing loading were shown in the 2,500 feet takeoff run, 12·5 minutes required to climb to 15,000 feet, and 103 m.p.h. landing speed.

Armament included a ·30 calibre flexible gun in the nose operated by the bombardier, two ·50 calibre guns in the deck turret, another ·30 calibre flexible gun at a bottom opening, and another ·50 calibre flexible gun in the tail turret. The tail gunner had room enough to sit upright, unlike the prone position on the earlier B-23 and B-25 types. Ammunition supply included 1,200 ·30 calibre rounds and 1,200 ·50 calibre rounds. A pair of 2,000 lb. bombs could be accommodated in the main bomb bay, with up to 4,800 lb. of smaller bombs available if the aft bay was used.

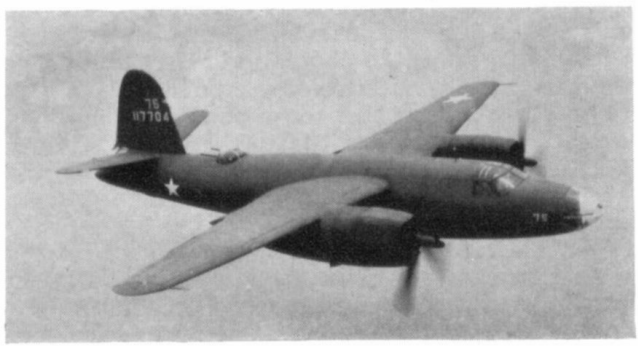
The first 113 hours of testing went well without serious incident, and in February 1941 the first four aircraft were accepted, by the Army Air Corps. At Langley Field, Virginia, the 22nd Bombardment Group (Medium) became the first to use the B-26. But of 66 Martins accepted by June, only 21 had been delivered, with 44 remaining in storage. A series of failures of the front wheel strut caused the delay in bringing the B-26 to operational status. The strut was strengthened but it was discovered that the accidents had been due to improper weight distribution. The manufacturer had had to deliver the aircraft without guns, and had trimmed the new B-26's for delivery flights by carefully loading service tools and spare parts in a prescribed manner. When the Army took over, these were removed without replacement ballast. The resultant forward movement of the centre of gravity had multiplied the loads on the nosewheel, causing the accidents.

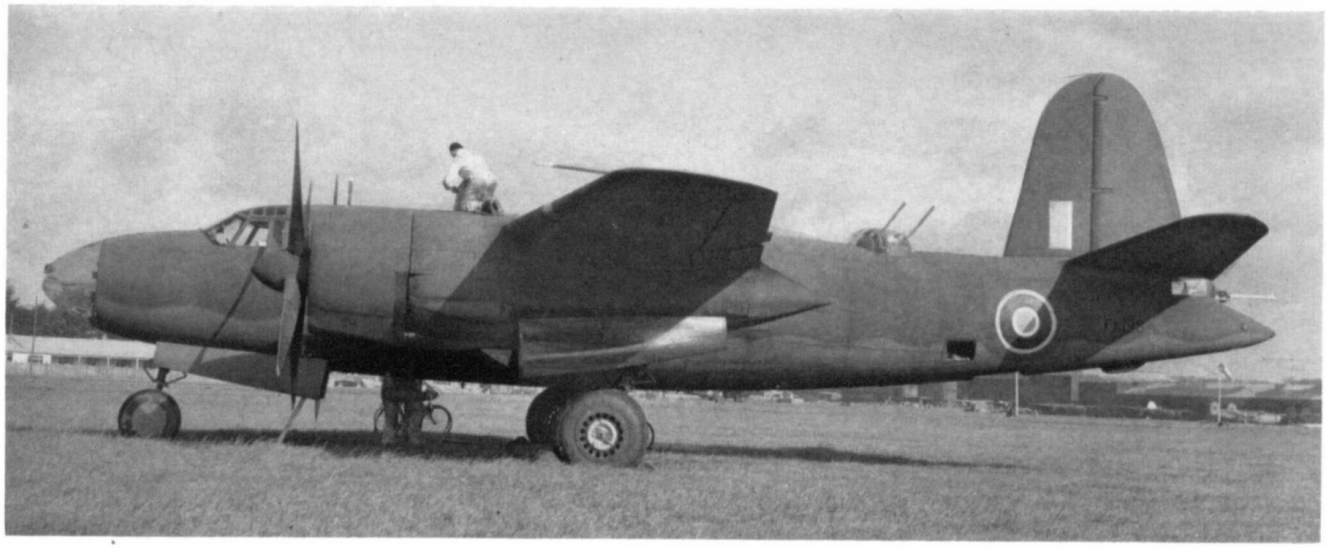
Addition of the guns corrected the problem, and in October 1941 Martin's production lines completed the original contract and delivered the first B-26A, 41-7345. This model differed from the first mainly by provision for an extra ferry tank in the rear bomb bay. Thirty had the R-2,800-5 Wasps, but 109 delivered with the R-2,800-39 of identical power were known as the B-26A-1. Weight had increased to 21,741 lbs. empty, 28,367 lbs. gross, and ferry range to 2,600 miles with 1,462 gallons.

In 1942, many of the original B-26's were fitted with the extra ferry tanks, and the B-26 and B-26A mingled in service. These Martins had received the name "Marauder" in October 1941. Some ships had replaced the ·30 calibre nose gun with a ·50 calibre weapon. Fifty-two B-26A's, serials FK109 to FK160, were assigned to the Royal Air Force with the name "Marauder I". By the time production of the B-26A was completed in April 1942, the Marauder had entered combat.

109 machines powered by the R-2800-39 Wasp were delivered as the B-26A-1. (Photo: Peter M. Bowers Collection)

The B-26B differed in many minor particulars from the previous marks; note the absence of propeller spinners on this machine. (Photo: U.S.A.A.F.)





An early Marauder I of the Royal Air Force, FK138; *fifty-two B-26A's were purchased, most being issued to units in the Middle East.* (Photo: Imp. War Mus. CHI 17449)

FIRST BLOOD

The day after the attack on Pearl Harbour, the 22nd Group, the only Army Air Force unit operational with the B-26, was ordered from Langley Field to Muroc, California. It remained there on patrol duties until 31st January 1942. The group was then moved by ship to Hawaii, where ferry tanks were fitted and its 57 B-26's flown to Brisbane, Australia by 25th February 1942. On 5th April 1942, the 22nd Group flew the Marauder's first combat mission of the war; leaving Tounsville, Australia to refuel at Port Moresby and bomb Rabaul. For these attacks on Japanese shipping and airfields, each B-26 had a 250-gallon bomb bay tank and carried four 500 lb. or twenty 100 lb. bombs 1,300 miles to their targets.

By 24th May the B-26 attacks on Rabaul were ended, after over 80 sorties on 16 missions. This period also saw a series of raids on Japanese bases in the Lae area. Flown over the Owen Stanley mountains and the New Guinea jungles, these unescorted raids were vigorously opposed by Zero fighters. The B-26s' speed and ruggedness limited its losses to three Marauders from the 84 sorties flown against Lae between 24th April and 4th July 1942. Against the same targets in this period, B-25's lost 11 planes on 70 sorties.

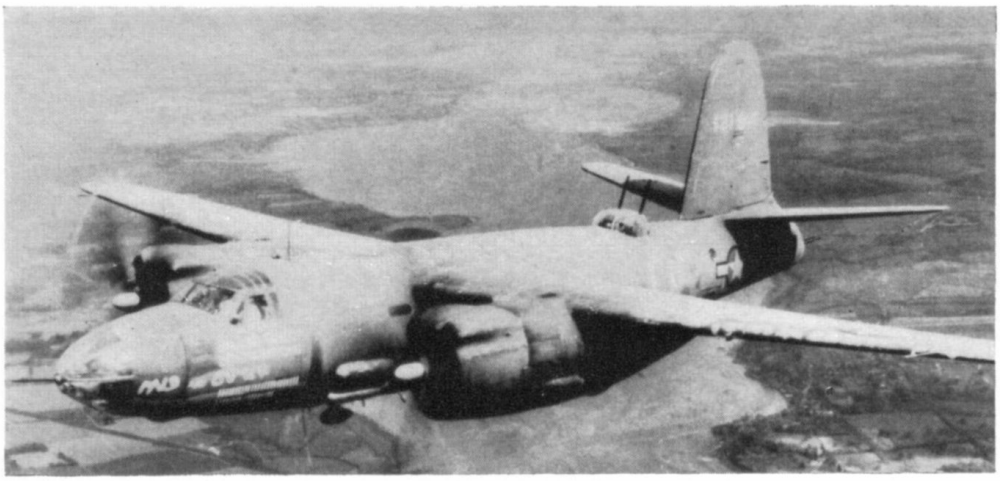
The Marauder became the first Army bomber to use torpedoes, when a rack was installed under the keel to hold the torpedo externally. Four aircraft thus equipped had been delayed at Hawaii for torpedo-training, and were used in the Battle of Midway. On 4th June, 1942, these four, flown by Captain Collins and Lieutenant Watson of the 38th Group and Lieutenants Mayes and Muri of the 22nd Group were launched from Midway. They began torpedo runs at the Japanese carriers at 800 feet altitude, dropping to ten feet under heavy attack from Zeros. Two Marauders were lost, and those of Collins and Muri returned badly shot up, but no hits were made on the enemy vessels.

Twenty-four Marauders of the 73rd and 77th Bombardment (formerly 42nd group) Squadrons had been sent north to Alaska in May 1942, joining the 28th Group. These planes carried torpedoes while searching in the fog for the Japanese carrier that attacked Dutch Harbour. Three or four B-26's did find the *Ryuyo* on the day (June 4th) of the Midway fight, but no hits were scored. The Alaskan Marauders had few later opportunities to fight.

Further operations in the Southwest Pacific showed that the B-25 Mitchell's longer range and shorter takeoff runs made it more suitable for Pacific island-hopping than the B-26. The 38th Group's Martins were replaced by B-25's before the group went into action in September 1942, and during 1943, the 22nd Group also shifted from Marauders to Mitchells, ending the B-26s' Pacific combat.

The Royal Air Force had its first three B-26A's (Marauder I) ferried across the Atlantic for tests late in 1941, but most of the 52 Martins went to the Middle

Note cockpit, cowling, nose and turret details of this B-26B, s/n 41-17694. (Photo: U.S.A.A.F.)



41-31819 "Mild and Bitter", a B-26B-25 of the 450th Bomb. Sqdn., 322nd Bomb. Grp., the first Marauder to complete 100 operational missions from the United Kingdom. The 322nd Group became operational at Great Saling in May 1943, and mounted the early low-level missions which culminated in the massacre of 17th May.
(Photo: Imp. War Mus. EA 21988)

East in 1942 for service in Egypt. About August, No. 14 Squadron became the first to receive the Marauder, which replaced Blenheims. Conversion training was completed without difficulty, and the first operational Marauder mission was flown on 28th October 1942. This was a reconnaissance sortie flown in connection with the El Alamein battle, made by FK 121 "Y-Yoke".

Anti-shipping sweeps were flown, and bombs dropped on Tunisian installations, and mines sewn in Tunis harbour. Unhappily, one Marauder was downed by Spitfires who mistook its identity, on 16th December. The squadron's first torpedo reconnaissance mission was flown 28th December, 1942. Two other R.A.F. squadrons, Nos. 326 and 327, also used the Marauder I after this period.

NEW STING IN THE TAIL

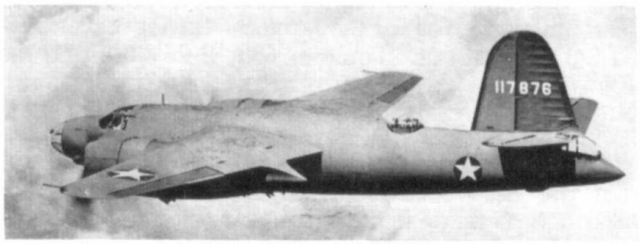
A new tail defence distinguished the B-26B, the model used in the greatest quantity. In place of the single hand-held gun with 400 rounds of ammunition, two ·50 calibre guns, each supplied with 1,500 rounds, were installed in a stepped-down tail position. Ammunition was fed from containers in the aft bomb bay on a pair of roller tracks, with the cartridges riding the track upright on their butt ends.

Other innovations on the B model included a 24 volt electric system, self-sealing fuel lines, and a rearrangement of various internal equipment. The propeller spinners were deleted, a rack beneath the fuselage could be attached to handle a 2,000 lb. torpedo, and the new tail position increased the overall length to 58 ft. 3 in.

Appearing in May 1942, the B-26B had the R-2800-5 Wasp on 307 aircraft, but block numbers were introduced on 95 B-26B-2's in August. This model had the R-2800-41 yielding 2,000 h.p. for takeoff and 1,600 h.p. at 13,500. Top speed was increased from 311 m.p.h. on the earlier B-26B specification to 317 m.p.h. at 14,500 ft. Weight was increased to 22,380 lbs. empty, 29,725 lbs. designs, and 34,000 lbs. gross; the latter including 3,000 lbs. of bombs and 962 gallons of fuel. Range at that weight was 1,150 miles at 260 m.p.h. and service ceiling was 23,500 feet.

The R-2800-43 of similar power, which was used on all remaining Marauder models, was introduced on 28 B-26B-3's. This model also had enlarged air intakes on top of the engine cowling so that sand filters could be fitted when necessary to protect carburettor intakes during tropical operations. These intakes were retrofitted to many earlier aircraft.

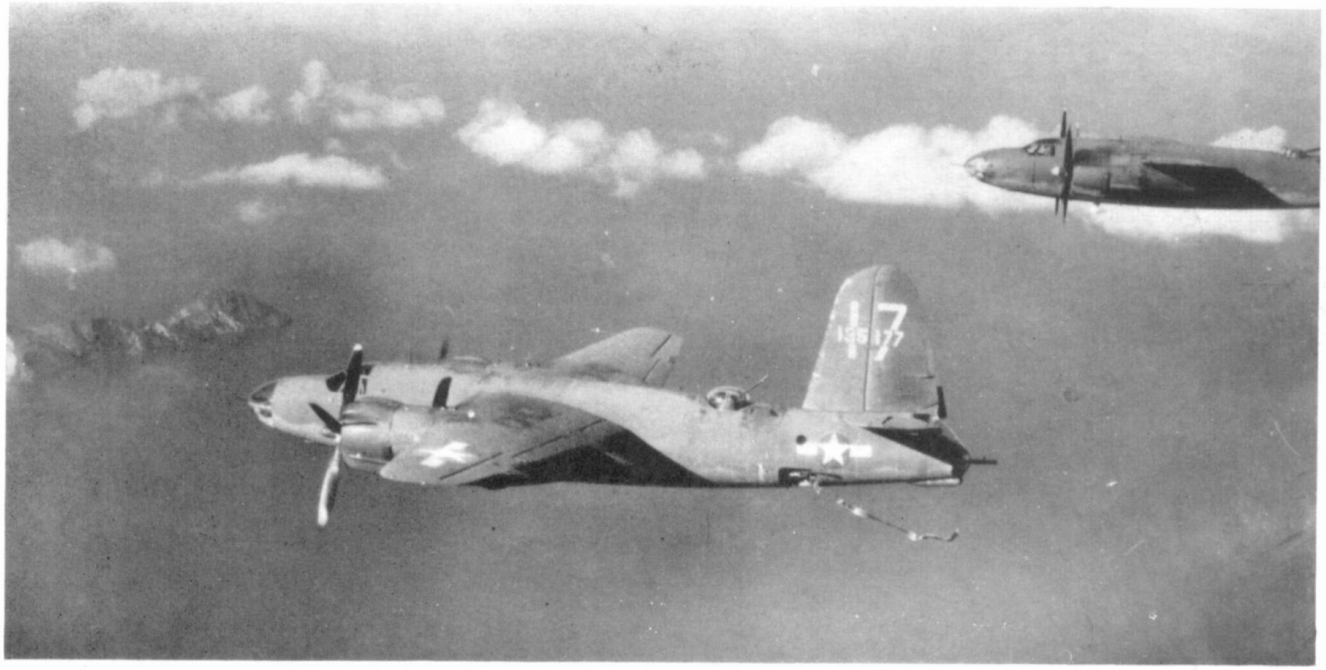
The B-26B-4, which appeared about October 1942, had a lengthened nosewheel strut to increase wing



Commencing production in August 1942, the B-26B-2 was powered by Wasp R-2800-41 engines, increasing the top speed to 317 m.p.h. at 14,500 feet.
Photo: Imp. War Mus. OEM 4807)

Shark-mouth decoration sported by a B-26B-40 over Italy.
(Photo: Imp. War Mus. EA 24353)

Twin ·50 calibre tail guns of a B-26C-5-MO.
(Photo: U.S.A.A.F.)



B-26C-25's returning from a mission in Italy. The port engine of the aircraft in the foreground was damaged by German flak at Roccasecca Bridge; on the return flight the crew lightened ship to ease the strain on the starboard engine, jettisoning all movable equipment. As this photograph was taken, a belt of ·50 calibre ammunition was dropped from the tunnel gun position.
(Photo: Imp. War Mus. XA 12735)

incidence and lift at takeoff, plus minor equipment changes such as a new starter, navigation instruments, and winterization gear. Of 211 built, the last 141 had the light tunnel gun replaced by a pair of ·50 calibre waist guns firing through side hatches on the bottom of the rear fuselage.

Nine new A.A.F. medium bomber groups were activated in 1942 as Marauder units, but it was in this period that criticism of the type reached its heights. A series of bad accidents during the training of new pilots had brought upon the B-26 such names as "Widow Maker" and "Flying Prostitute".

The bad reputation of the Marauder at home contrasted sharply with its success in combat, and is to be explained primarily by the kind of pilots involved. Increases in weight were steadily making the B-26s' wing loading, and therefore its stalling and landing speeds, higher and higher. This made a touchy and demanding aircraft; and an engine failure with the wheels down could be catastrophic. The veteran pilots of the overseas units had the experience to deal with such an aircraft, the new pilots at home did not. Many of the new pilots hadn't flown any twin-engined aircraft at all, and when inexperienced ground crews and overloading of the type was added, the accident rate was understandable.

Air Force inspection boards therefore decided to keep the B-26 in production, and decided to solve the problems by a new training programme and by enlarging the aircraft's wing. The new wing increasing span from 65 to 71 feet and area from 602 to 658 feet, would be introduced on the 642nd B-26B and the new B-26C models. In the meantime, in July and again in October 1942, the A.A.F. considered cancelling the type, but commendations from combat zone leaders kept the B-26 going.

THE B-26C

The B-26C had been ordered on 28th June 1941 and was built in a new Martin factory at Omaha, Nebraska. Redesignated B-26C-5-MO, it was the first Marauder to appear with the new wing. The first three were accepted in August 1942, and 86 B-26C-5's were accepted by the end of the year.

The wide wing introduced on the production line of Martin's Baltimore plant after 641 short-winged Marauders (B-26B-2,-3,-4) had been built by the end of 1942. The first examples appeared in January 1943, with 150 B-26B-10-MA delivered on the original B-26B contract.

Except for place of manufacture, the B-26B-10 and the 175 B-26C-5's were identical. Weight had now increased to 24,000 lbs. empty and 37,000 lbs. gross. Top speed had declined to 282 m.p.h. and cruising to 214 m.p.h. Defensive armament now totalled twelve ·50 calibre guns with 4,250 rounds, and another 500 gallon tank could increase capacity to 1,962 gallons, takeoff weight to 38,200 lbs. and ferry range to 2,850 miles.

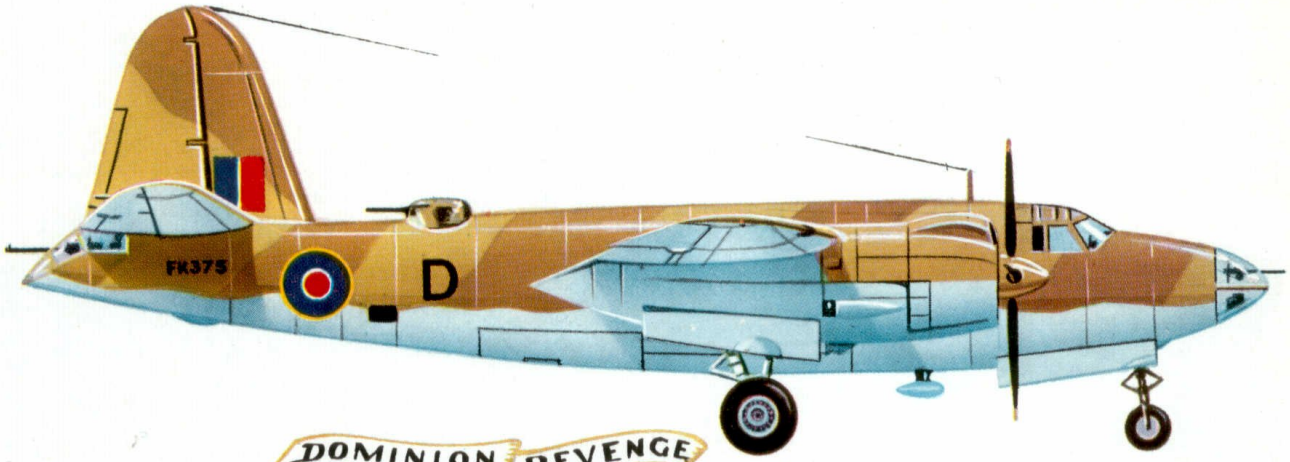
A new power-operated Martin-Bell tail turret was introduced in March 1943 on the B-26B-20-MA and B-26C-10-MO. This turret gave the gunner increased protection and efficiency by moving him slightly forward. Protected by an armoured bulkhead, and thick glass window, he operated the guns electro-hydraulically.

During 1943, production totalled 1,215 B-26B's from Baltimore and 1,149 B-26C's from Omaha. Eleven Marauder groups were assigned to combat in European theatres of action.

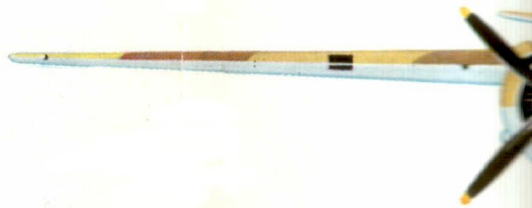
MARAUDERS IN EUROPE

The first Marauder group to cross the Atlantic was the 319th. It moved its short-wing B-29B's to Shipdham, England in September 1942, and flew to combat in Algeria in November. It was soon joined by the 17th Group, the pioneer B-25 Mitchell outfit that had converted to Marauders in the summer of 1942, flew to North Africa, and made its first combat mission over Tunis on 30th December 1942. The third B-26 group in the Mediterranean area was the 320th,

(continued on page 10)



Emblem



MARTIN MARAUDER I (FK 375)
of No. 14 Sqdn., R.A.F., Fayid and Western Desert (1942-43)

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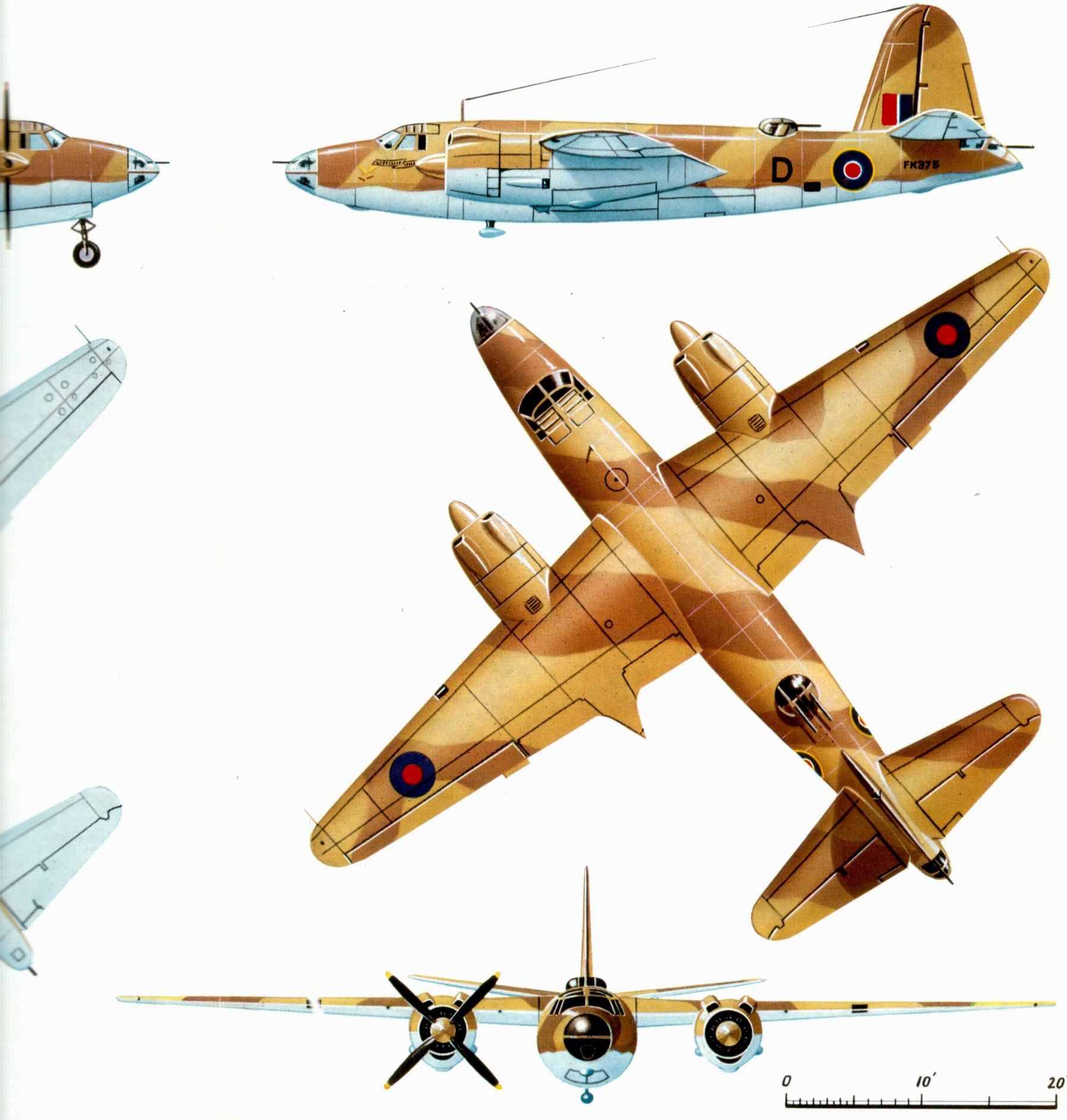
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Left and facing page:
The 387th Bomb. Grp.'s yellow and black tail stripes applied to an olive drab and grey B-26B-50 of the 559th Bomb. Sqdn. The aircraft, 42-95930, is coded KX-D.
(Photos: U.S.A.A.F.)

which entered combat in April 1943, with the 12th Air Force.

The first Marauder group to fly combat from England was the 322nd, which had arrived at Great Saling on 8th March 1943. After training in low-level attack, the group sent twelve B-26's to attack the Velsen generating station at Ijmuiden, in the Netherlands, on 14th May 1943. Flying through heavy flak at 100 to 300 feet, they laid their 500 lb. bombs, with 30 second delay fuses, on the target without loss. However, the same delayed fuses that were to enable Dutch workmen to escape apparently allowed Germans to defuse or remove the bombs.*

N3-E, a B-26C-45 of the 495th Bomb. Sqdn., 344th Bomb. Grp. during a raid on targets in enemy-occupied France. Note the olive drab anti-glare panels on the inboard upper segment of each engine cowling. (Photo: Imp. War. Mus. EA 24318)

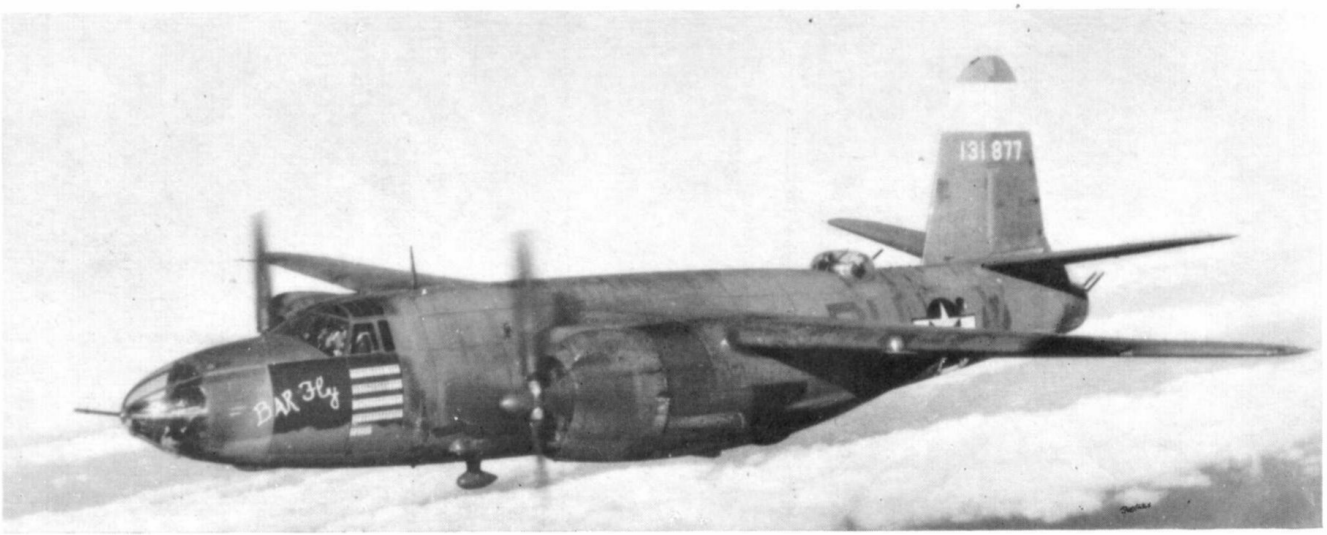
Another mission to the same target was scheduled for 17th May, over the objection of Group officers, who felt extreme danger was to be expected from alerted German defences. Eleven aircraft were dispatched, of which one aborted due to an electrical failure. Heavy flak greeted the low-altitude raid, and the aircraft of the C.O., Colonel Robert M. Stillman, was the first plane to go down. Another Marauder was hit and collided with a third, and then a fourth went down. Two more fell to flak near Haarlem, and then, on the return flight, enemy Messerschmitt Bf 109's attacked, and all the remaining B-26's were destroyed.

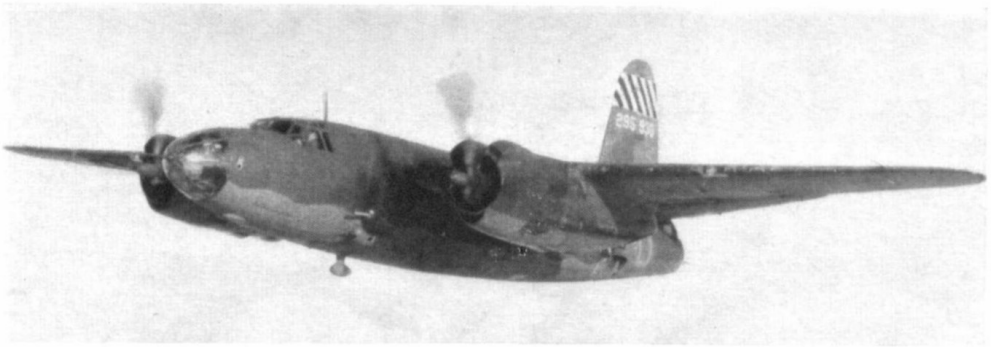
As a result of the loss of this entire force, the A.A.F. decided to change its medium bomber tactics in Europe from low-altitude to medium altitude attacks, out of the range of automatic anti-aircraft weapons. After retraining, combat missions were resumed on 17th July 1943, with a series of attacks on enemy airfields and other targets. In October 1943, the Marauders in England were assigned to the Ninth Air Force, which by May 1944 had eight B-26 groups.

These groups, which prepared the way for invasion of Normandy, were the 322nd, 323rd, 344th, 386th, 387th, 391st, 394th and 397th Bombardment Groups. These comprised the main overseas force of Marauders, together with the three groups in the Mediterranean. Mention might also be made of the 335th

**It is probable that the 322nd only escaped the attention of* Luftwaffe *fighters on this day because of a fierce battle between the interceptors and 8th A.F. heavy bombers over the German Bight.*

Sixty-six bomb tallies displayed on the nose of "Bar Fly", a 386th Bomb. Grp. Marauder. See colour illustration on p.2 of this Profile.
(Photo: Imp. War Mus. FRA 102017)





and 336th groups back in the U.S.A., which were replacement training units until they were disbanded in May 1944.

The Royal Air Force received only 19 short-winged B-26B's (FK362 to FK380), which went to North Africa as the Marauder IA, but 100 B-26C-30's (FB418 to FB517) went to the South African Air Force as the Marauder II. These formed the initial equipment of Nos. 12, 21, 24, 25 and 30 Squadrons, until the later Marauder III's arrived in 1944. As part of the Desert Air Force, they supported the Allied forces invading Italy. After the French Air Force was revived in North Africa, Marauders were also issued to six French squadrons.

Production of 1,883 B-26B's ended at Baltimore in February 1944, with the last B-26B-55-MA. In addition, Martin built 208 AT-23A's for the Air Force. First appearing in August 1943, the AT-23A had no armour, guns or turret, but had a C-5 tow target windlass installed for its gunnery training rôle.

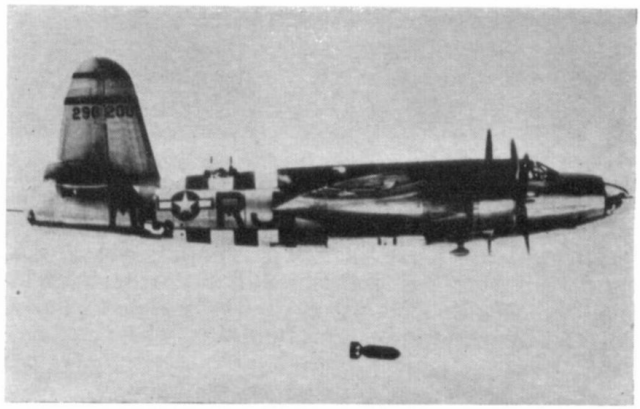
Marauder production ended at Omaha in April 1944 after 1,210 B-25C-5 to B-25C-45-MO and 375 AT-23B target tow trainers.* Of the target tow ships, the U.S. Navy got 200 in September-October 1943 and 25 in 1944. Known as the JM-1, their bright orange-yellow finish was familar at Navy stations around the country. Air Force AT-23B's, however, retained their natural metal finish and were redesignated TB-26 in 1944.

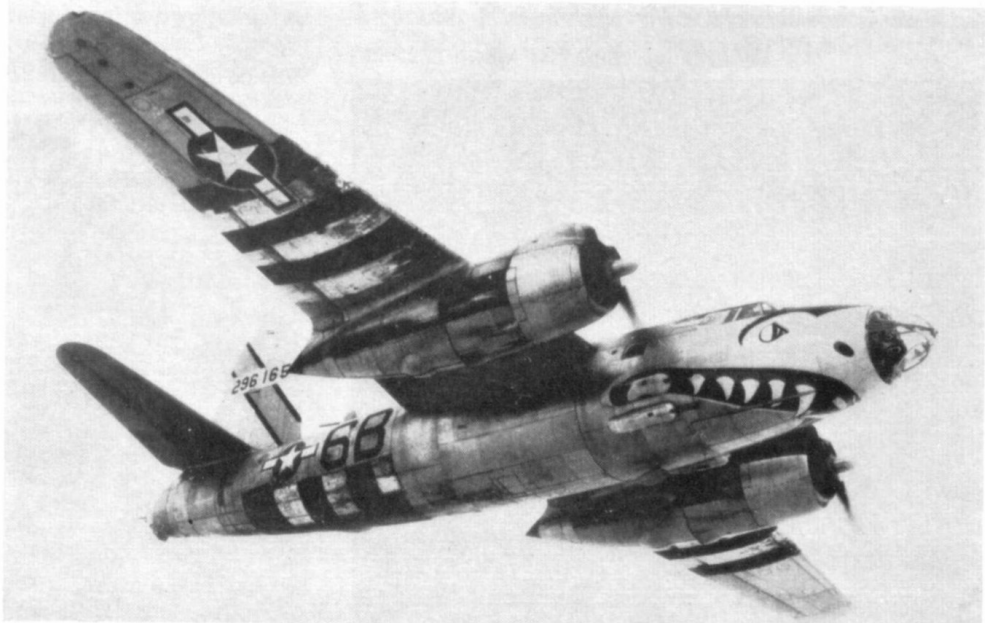
THE MARAUDER DESCRIBED

A description of the Marauder would begin with the semi-monocoque aluminium alloy fuselage fabricated in three sections. The structure had four main longerons, transverse circular frames, and longitudinal stringers covered with a flush united metal skin. The mid-section with the bomb-bays was built integrally with the wing section.

The primary wing structure was box type, formed by two tension field-web beams and top and bottom thick gauge skin reinforced by nut section members to give a torsionally rigid structure. Continuous hinges attaching the leading edge to the primary structure facilated maintenance. The retractable tricycle landing gear was hydraulically actuated, the nose wheel pivoting 90 degrees to retract into the nose section, and the main wheels folding back into the engine nacelles.

The identification symbol of the 323rd Bomb. Grp. was a horizontal white stripe across the vertical tail surfaces; this B-26B-55 of the 455th Bomb. Sqdn. carries only the black borders across its bare-metal fin and rudder. The dark areas on the aircraft are due to the quality of the photograph, not to painting.
(Photo: Imp. War Mus. EA 26501)





Invasion stripes and an elaborate shark-mouth decoration on a B-26B-55 of the 598th Bomb. Sqdn., 397th Bomb. Grp.
(Photo: Imp. War Mus. FRA 101024)

Based at Rivenal in September 1944, these Marauders of the 596th and 599th Bomb. Sqdns., 397th Bomb. Grp. carried a diagonal yellow stripe-outlined in black as their Group symbol. The aircraft in the foreground, s/n 42-96137, is a B-26B-55 coded 9F-Y.
(Photo: Imp. War Mus. EA 24392)

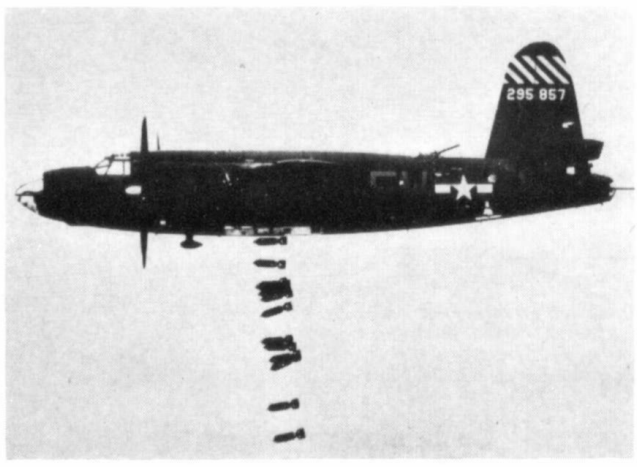
The tail fins were of box, smooth stressed skin cantilever structure consisting of two tension field-type beams with sheet metal ribs. The elevators were covered by metal, but the rudder was fabric covered.

Fine study of a B-26C-45 of the 451st Bomb. Sqdn., 322nd Bomb. Grp. (42-107685, ER-V) over the English Channel during the early stages of the Normandy invasion, June 1944. The vessels below appear to be patrol boats and landing craft.
(Photo: Imp. War Mus. EA 25628)

Rugged and strong, the B-26 stood up well to combat damage, and proved easy to produce in quantity. Cost of the B-26's dropped from about $261,000 each in 1941 to $192,427 in 1944, but the B-25 cost dropped from $180,000 to $142,000 in the same period.

Equipment of the definitive B-26B/C version included provision for up to seven men and twelve

A 558th Bomb. Sqdn. B-26B-50 unloads over the target. Based at Ongar as a sub-unit of the 98th Bombardment Wing, this became operational in August of 1943.
(Photo: Imp. War Mus. EA 22817)



Note the folded bomb-doors of this B-26C-25, YA-V of the 555th Bomb. Sqdn., 386th Bomb. Grp. Normal bomb loads for 9th Air Force missions comprised eight 500 lb. or sixteen 250 lb. weapons; maximum short-range load was 5,200 lbs.
(Photo: Imp. War Mus. EA 27314)

·50 calibre guns. The bomb sight was in the nose cone, with a flexible gun and 270 rounds. A ·50 calibre gun with 200 rounds was fixed in the lower right nose in early blocks, but deleted on later models.

Pilot and co-pilot sat side by side in armoured seats behind an armoured front bulkhead. Four fixed guns, with 200 r.p.g. in two individual blisters on each side of the fuselage behind the pilots gave the Marauder a forward strafing capability.

Behind the pilots was a compartment for the navigator and radio operator. In emergencies the four crewmen in the front fuselage escaped through the forward bomb bay. Bomb load could include two 2,000 lb. or 1,600 lb. bombs, four 1,000 lb., eight 500 lb., sixteen 250 lb., or thirty 100 lb. bombs. Maximum weight, seldom used, comprised of 5,200 lbs.; two 1,600 lb. and a 2,000 lb. torpedo on the external rack.

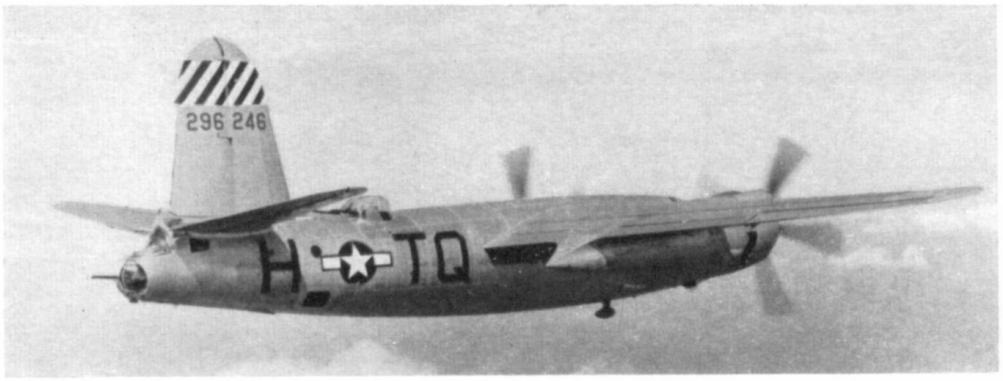
Fuel supply included two 350-gallon self-sealing main tanks in the wings, two 121 gallon auxiliary tanks, and up to four 250 gallon bomb bay ferry tanks for a total capacity of 1,962 gallons. Provisions for the two rear bay tanks were deleted from the B-26B-25 and B-26C-30 and later blocks. This also reduced bomb capacity to six 500 lb. or twenty 100 lb. bombs.

The Martin 250CE dorsal power turret was behind the bomb bay, with two guns and 400 r.p.g. The turret turned 360 degree traverse and 70 degree elevation. The waist gunner manned a pair of hand-operated beam guns, with 240 r.p.g.; and the tail gunner's armoured turret mounted two ·50 calibre weapons with 800 rounds for each.

The reader may wish a brief review of the models subsequent to the B/C types that are the topic of this *Profile*. The lone XB-26D was an early B-26 modified to test heated surface type de-icing equipment. A stripped version of the B-26B, with 2,000 lbs. less weight, and the upper turret moved forward to the navigator's compartment, was planned as the B-26E, but was never actually built.

One hundred B-26F-1-MA's began appearing in February 1944, with the wing's angle of incidence increased 3·5 degrees. This reduced the takeoff run and landing speed, and lowered the top speed to

Two B-26C-45's of the Free French Air Force unit GR 1/22, 1e Escadrille, seen here over Italy.
(Photo: Imp. War Mus. NYP 22936)



Left and Below:
These studies show a typical late-model B-26B of the 9th Air Force. The diagonal yellow and black stripes on the tail indicate a machine of the 387th Bombardment Group, and the code TQ identifies the 556th Squadron.
(Photos: U.S.A.A.F.)

277 m.p.h. British equipment was used on 200 B-26F-2 and F-6's.

The last variant was the B-26G, which differed mainly in that AN Standard fittings were substituted for A.A.F. fittings, with various equipment changes. Production amounted to 893 B-26G-MA and 57 TB-26G, including fifteen TB-266-15's in November 1944, and the last 32 TB-26G-25's going to the U.S. Navy as the JM-2 in March 1945. Production ceased on March 30th, 1944 with the 5,157th Marauder, although a single B-266-25 (44-28221) was modified to try out the bicycle landing gear planned for the B-47 and B-48 jet.

British lend-lease contracts supplied 100 B-26F-2, 100 B-26F-6, 75 B-26G-11 and 75 B-26G-21 in 1944 as the Marauder III (HD402 to HD651). These re-equipped Nos. 14 and 39 Squadrons R.A.F., and the South African squadrons mentioned previously.

The A.A.F. record against the European Axis powers included 129,943 Marauder sorties, and a bomb tonnage of 169,382 lbs., with a loss of 911 B-26's lost in combat and 402 enemy aircraft claimed destroyed.

Peak A.A.F. inventory during the war had been 1,931 B-26's in March 1944, with 11 groups in action against Germany. Whether hammering the invasion coast, *Luftwaffe* air fields, supply points or V-1 launching sites, the Marauders had performed excellent services, with a combat loss rate of less than one per cent.

© *Ray Wagner.*

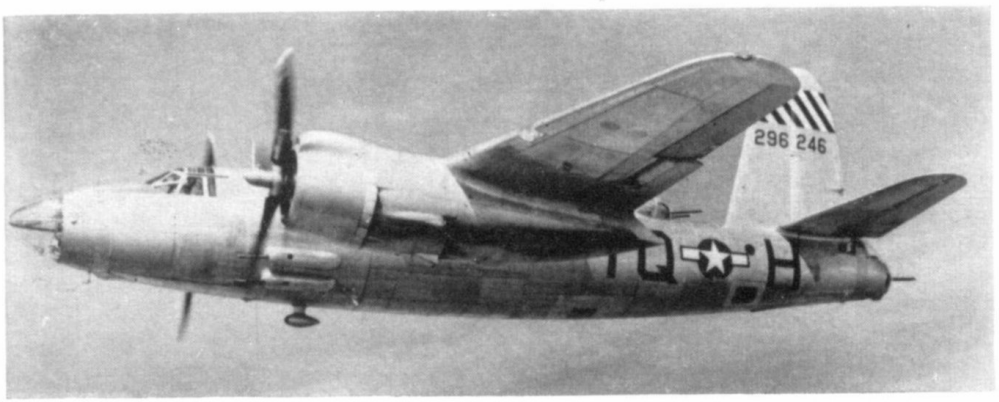
**These figures have also been given as 1,235 and 350 respectively, but the above version checks with the serial numbers.*

B-26 to B-26C SERIAL NUMBERS

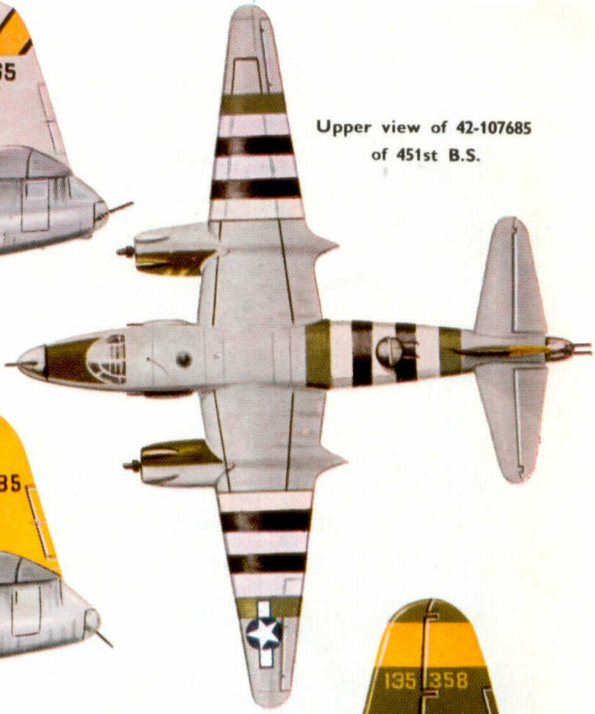
No. A/C	Type	Contract	Date Approved	Serials
201	B-26	AC-13243	20th Sept. '39	40-1361 to 40-1561
21	B-26A	AC-13243	16th Sept. '40	41-7345 to 41-7365
2	B-26A-1	AC-13243	16th Sept. '40	41-7366 to 41-7367
1	B-26A	AC-13243	16th Sept. '40	41-7368
62	B-26A-1	AC-13243	16th Sept. '40	41-7369 to 41-7430
1	B-26A	AC-13243	16th Sept. '40	41-7431
45	B-26A-1	AC-13243	16th Sept. '40	41-7432 to 41-7476
7	B-26A	AC-13243	16th Sept. '40	41-7477 to 41-7483
81	B-26B	AC-16137	28th Sept. '40	41-17544 to 41-17624
1	B-26B3	AC-16137	28th Sept. '40	41-17625
226	B-26B	AC-16137	28th Sept. '40	41-17626 to 41-17851
95	B-26B-2	AC-16137	28th Sept. '40	41-17852 to 41-17946
27	B-26B-3	AC-16137	28th Sept. '40	41-17947 to 41-17973
211	B-26B-4	AC-16137	28th Sept. '40	41-17974 to 41-18184
150	B-26B-10	AC-16137	28th Sept. '40	41-18185 to 41-18344
100	B-26B-15	DA-46	26th June '41	41-31573 to 41-31672
100	B-26B-20	DA-46	26th June '41	41-31673 to 41-31772
100	B-26B-25	DA-46	26th June '41	41-31773 to 41-31872
100	B-26B-30	DA-46	26th June '41	41-31893 to 41-31972
100	B-26B-35	DA-46	26th June '41	41-31973 to 41-32072
198	B-26B-40	DA-1049	7th Mar. '42	42-43260 to 42-43357
2	AT-23A	DA-1049	7th Mar. '42	42-43358 to 42-43359
2	B-26B-40	DA-1049	7th Mar. '42	42-43360 to 42-43361
97	AT-23A	DA-1049	7th Mar. '42	42-43362 to 42-43458
1	B-26B-40	DA-1049	7th Mar. '42	42-43459
109	AT-23A	AC-31733	29th Sept. '42	42-95629 to 42-95737
91	B-26B-45	AC-31733	29th Sept. '42	42-95739 to 42-95828
200	B-26B-50	AC-31733	29th Sept. '42	42-95829 to 42-96028
200	B-26B-55	AC-31733	29th Sept. '42	42-96029 to 42-96228
175	B-26C-5	AC-19342	28th June '41	41-34673 to 41-34847
60	B-26C-10	AC-19342	28th June '41	41-34848 to 41-34907
90	B-26C-15	AC-19342	28th June '41	41-34908 to 41-34997

SPECIFICATION

Martin B-26B/C "Marauder II".
(blocks B-10 to B-55, C-5 to C-45).
Powerplant: Pratt & Whitney R-2800-43, 1,920 h.p. takeoff and 3,200 feet, 1,400 h.p. at 14,300 feet military power, 1,360 h.p. at 14,600 feet maximum continuous power. Curtiss 13 ft. 6 in. diameter four-bladed propeller.
Dimensions: Wing Span 71 ft., Length 58 ft. 3 in., Height 21 ft. 6 in., Tread 22 ft., Wing Area 658 sq. ft.
Weights: Empty 24,000 lbs. Design 31,900 lbs. Normal 37,000 lbs. (Ferry on early blocks only—38,200 lbs.).
Performance: (at 37,000 lbs. weight). Top speed 270 m.p.h. at sea level, 282 m.p.h. at 15,000 ft. Landing speed 135 m.p.h. at 28,000 lb. Climb, 1,200 ft. first minute, 15,000 ft. in 13 minutes. Service Ceiling 21,700 ft. Takeoff over 50 ft. obstacle 3,500 ft. Landing Run 2,900 ft. Range 1,150 miles at 214 m.p.h. with 3,000 lb. bombs and 962 gallons. Ferry range is 2,000 miles at 195 m.p.h. with 1,462 gallons, or (early blocks only) 2,850 miles with 1,962 gallons.

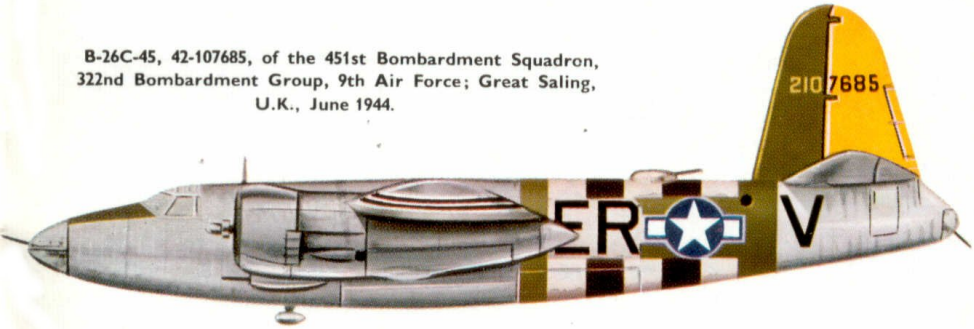


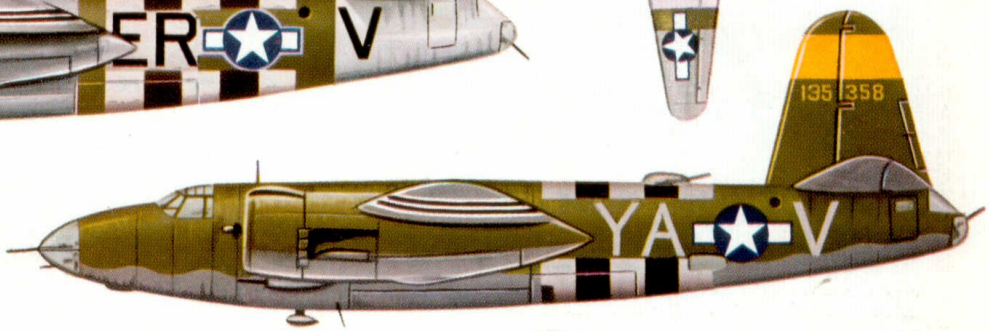
B-26B-55 of the 598th Bombardment Squadron, 397th Bombardment Group, 9th Air Force; Rivenal, U.K., June 1944.



Upper view of 42-107685 of 451st B.S.

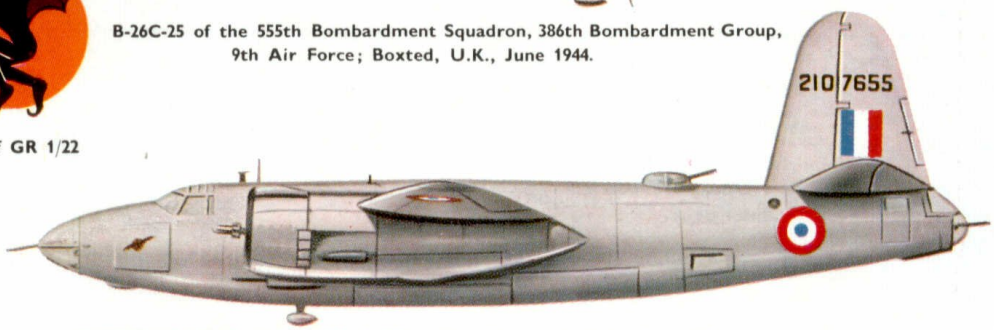
B-26C-45, 42-107685, of the 451st Bombardment Squadron, 322nd Bombardment Group, 9th Air Force; Great Saling, U.K., June 1944.



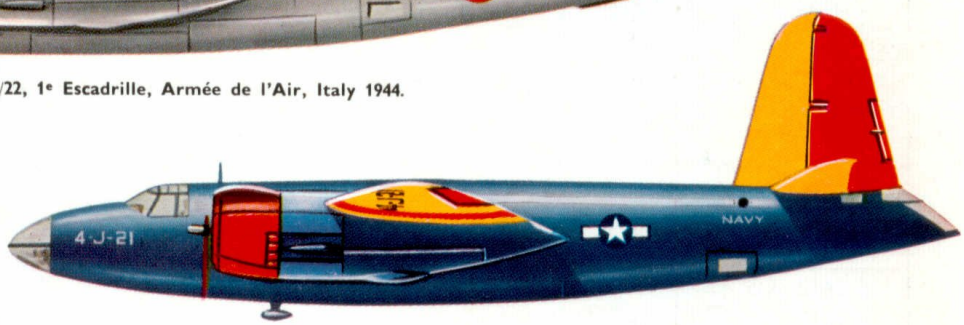


Emblem of GR 1/22

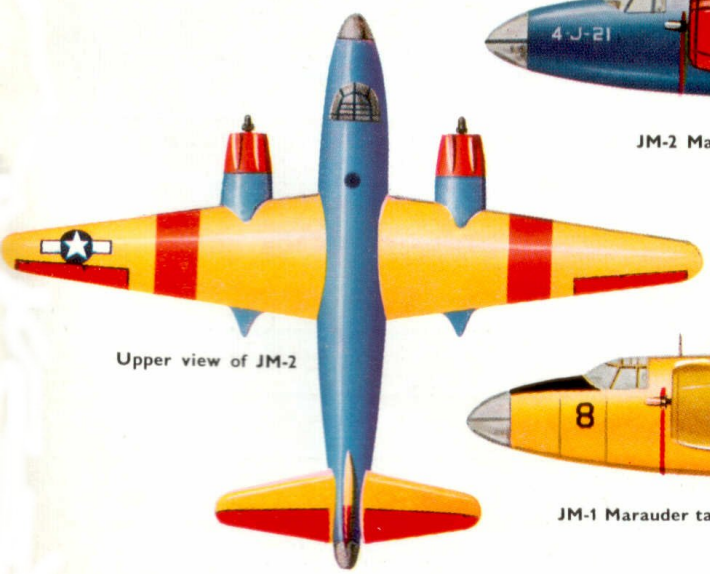
B-26C-25 of the 555th Bombardment Squadron, 386th Bombardment Group, 9th Air Force; Boxted, U.K., June 1944.



B-26C-45, 42-107655, of GR 1/22, 1e Escadrille, Armée de l'Air, Italy 1944.

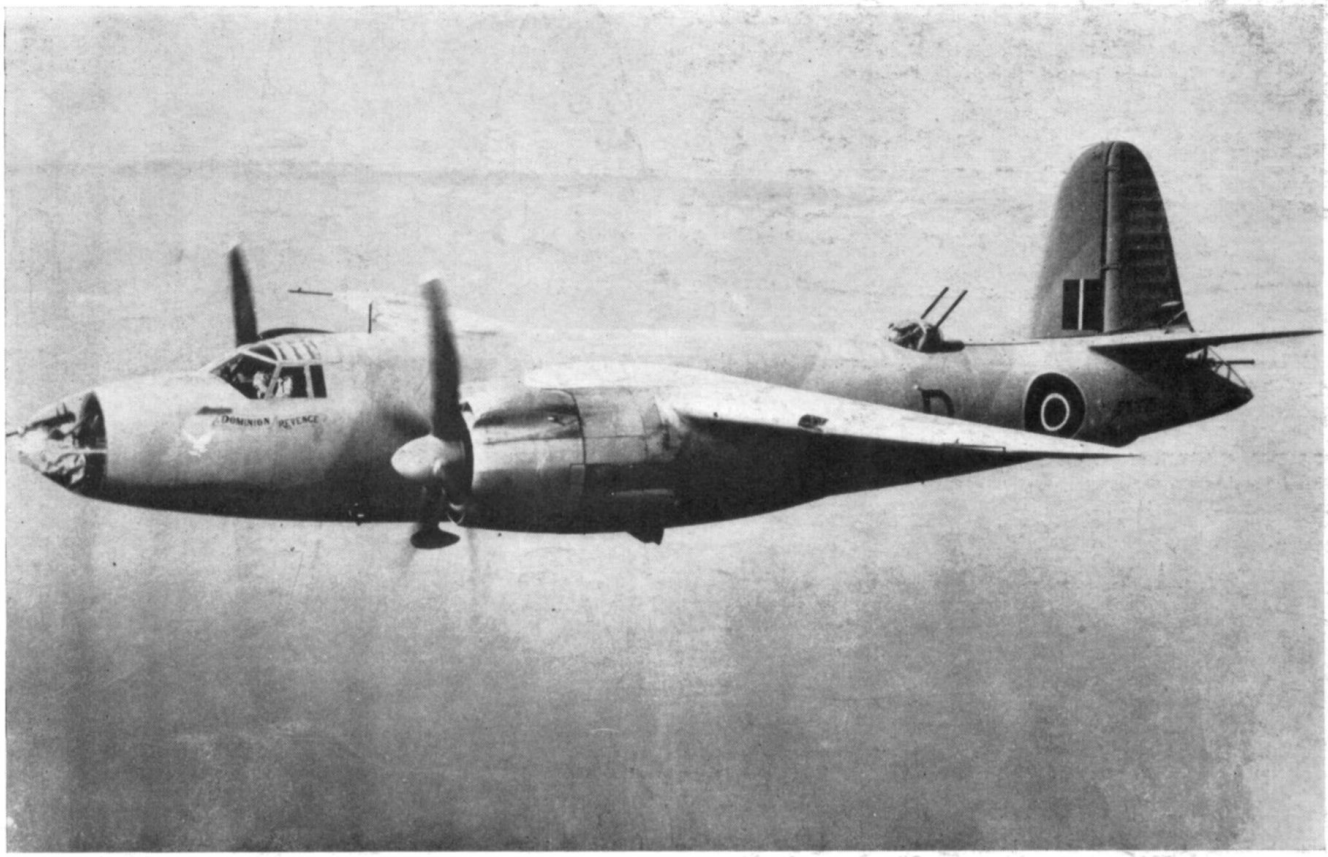


JM-2 Marauder target tug, U.S. Navy, 1944-5.



Upper view of JM-2

JM-1 Marauder target tug (formerly AT-23B) 66749 of U.S. Navy, January 1945.



One of the nineteen short-span B-26B's delivered to the R.A.F. as the Marauder Ib, FK375 "D" of No. 14 Squadron is seen here in flight over the Western Desert in 1942. This machine is the subject of the five-aspect painting on the centre pages of this Profile: *the "Dominion Revenge" emblem was applied to the nose at Feyid, Egypt by Richard Ward, illustrator of many* Aircraft Profiles, *during his wartime service with the Desert Air Force.* (Photo: Imp. War Mus. CM 5001)

175	B-26C-20	AC-19342	28th June '41	41-34998 to 41-35172
198	B-26C-25	AC-19342	28th June '41	41-35073 to 41-35370
1	AT-23B	AC-19342	28th June '41	41-35371
1	B-25C-25	AC-19342	28th June '41	41-35372
1	AT-23B*	AC-19342	28th June '41	41-35373
142	B-26C-30	AC-19342	28th June '41	41-35374 to 41-35515
1	AT-23B*	AC-19342	28th June '41	41-35516
22	B-26C-30	AC-19342	28th June '41	41-35517 to 41-35538
1	AT-23B*	AC-19342	28th June '41	41-35539
1	B-26C-30	AC-19342	28th June '41	41-35540
7	AT-23B*	AC-19342	28th June '41	41-35541 to 41-35547
4	B-26C-30	AC-19342	28th June '41	41-35548 to 41-35551
1	AT-23B*	AC-19342	28th June '41	41-33552
8	B-26C-30	AC-19342	28th June '41	41-35553 to 41-35560
312	AT-23B†	AC-19342	28th June '41	41-35561 to 41-35872
26	AT-23B	AC-38728	20th July '43	42-107471 to 42-107496
334	B-26C-45	AC-38728	20th July '43	42-107497 to 41-107830
25	AT-23B	AC-38728	20th July '43	42-107831 to 42-107855

** To JM-1.*
† 189 to JM-1.
Navy serial numbers for JM-1 were 66595-66794, (200 a/c).
75183-75207, (25 a/c).

UNITED STATES 9th AIR FORCE UNITS EQUIPPED WITH B-26 AIRCRAFT

Group Number	Squadrons (Codes)	Base and Month Operational	Tail Motif
	99th Bombardment Wing		
322nd B.G.	449th (PN), 450th (DR), 451st (ER), 452nd (SS).	May 1943 at Great Saling, U.K.	Light coloured rudder
344th B.G.	494th (K9), 495th (N3), 496th (Y5), 497th (71).	March 1944 at Stanstead, U.K.	White Triangle.
386th B.G.	552nd (AN), 553rd (RG), 554th (RU), 555th (YA).	July 1943 at Boxted, U.K.	Yellow horizontal stripe.
391st B.G.	572nd (P2), 573rd (08), 574th (T6), 575th (4L).	15th Feb. 1944 at Matching, U.K.	Yellow Triangle.
	98th Bombardment Wing		
323rd B.G.	453rd (VT), 454th (WT), 455th (RJ), 456th (YU).	July 1943 at Earles Colne, U.K.	White horizontal stripe.
387th B.G.	556th (TQ), 557th (KS), 558th (FW), 559th (KX).	August 1943 at Ongar, U.K.	Yellow/black diagonal stripe.
394th B.G.	584th (H9), 585th (K5), 586th (4T), 598th (5W).	March 1944 at Boreham, U.K.	White diagonal stripe.
397th B.G.	596th (U2), 597th (X2), 598th (6B), 599th (9F).	April 1944 at Rivenal, U.K.	Yellow diagonal stripe.

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